



SAN JUAN RIVER TRIP PLANNING INFORMATION



A float trip on the San Juan River in southeast Utah provides boaters with access to spectacular canyons rich in scenery, archaeology, history, remarkable geographic features, and desert wildlife.

PERMITS: A permit is required year-round to float the 102 mile section of the San Juan River between Montezuma Creek, UT and Clay Hills. Permits are issued only through a pre-season lottery and advance reservations to applicants 18 years of age or older. Do not show up at the launch ramp without a permit expecting to launch or join another group. Permits for Sand Island to Mexican Hat, Mexican Hat to Clay Hills, and Sand Island to Clay Hills may be obtained at www.recreation.gov. Permits for the Montezuma Creek to Sand Island segment must be obtained by contacting the BLM Monticello Field Office.

RESERVED CAMPSITES: For trips taking out at Clay Hills, camping below Government Rapid (~ river mile 64) is allowed at nine designated sites only. These sites must be reserved online through the BLM Monticello Field Office immediately after booking a permit or accepting an awarded lottery reservation on Recreation.gov.

RIVER ACCESS: There are 3 major river access points for the San Juan River (see map on pg.3). Trips usually launch at either Sand Island or Mexican Hat and take-out at Mexican Hat or Clay Hills. Clay Hills is the only viable take-out below Mexican Hat. There is a dangerous waterfall downstream from Clay Hills. Montezuma Creek to Sand Island is seldom floated and river access at Montezuma Creek is undeveloped.

TRIP LENGTH:

River Segment	Miles	Typical Days
Montezuma Creek to Sand Island	17	1 to 2
Sand Island to Mexican Hat	27	2 to 3
Mexican Hat to Clay Hills	57	4 to 5
Sand Island to Clay Hills	84	6 to 7

VEHICLE SHUTTLES: Shuttles from Sand Island to Mexican Hat take about 1 hour round trip. Shuttles from Sand Island and Mexican Hat to Clay Hills take 4 to 5 hours round trip. Very few shuttle services are available so plan ahead. Call the San Juan River office or San Juan County Visitor Services at (800) 574-4386 for current shuttle providers.

RIVER FLOW: The Navajo Dam in New Mexico controls San Juan River flows. The Animas River is a major tributary, whose confluence is downstream of the dam. San Juan Peak flows usually occur in late May and early June (see graph on pg. 5). There is usually adequate flow for boating all year. However, larger and heavier boats may have trouble navigating through dispersed mud bars from Slickhorn Canyon to Clay Hills during low water. Upstream flash floods and releases from the Navajo Dam can cause the river level to fluctuate in a short time. Be sure to tie boats securely when ashore and camp at safe areas. USGS river flow information is available at <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/rt>. The National Weather Service also provides a daily recorded flow summary at (801) 539-1311.

WHITEWATER: The San Juan River has class II to III rapids that require technical boating skill. Government Rapid often requires prior scouting and careful maneuvering.

NAVAJO NATION CAMPING CLOSURES: Due to conflict between recreational camping use and bighorn sheep lambing and nursing requirements, the following locations on Navajo Nation are closed to camping (see map on pg. 4): (1) The camps immediately above Eight-Foot Rapid on river left; (2) The area on river left from the corner below Eight-Foot Rapid to immediately above Ledge Rapid. Boaters holding camping permits from the Navajo Nation are still allowed to camp in the area immediately below Eight-Foot Rapid and the area immediately below Ledge Rapid. Scouting rapids is allowed. Avoid disturbing any bighorn sheep in the canyon.

NAVAJO NATION PERMITS: The left bank of the river from Montezuma Creek to Trimble Camp, and the Montezuma Creek boat launch are on the Navajo Indian Reservation. Remember that you are a guest and alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Permits for camping, hiking, and visiting archaeological sites are required.

Permits for visiting archaeological sites are issued by:

Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department

P.O. Box 4950, Window Rock, AZ 86515, (928) 871-7147

www.hpd.navajo-nsn.gov/images/hpd/crcs/permitpkg/forms/3.2_Class_A_permit_form.pdf

Camping and hiking permits are issued by:

Navajo Parks & Recreation Department

P.O. Box 2520, Window Rock, AZ 86515, (928) 871-6647

<http://navajonationparks.org/permits.htm>

Navajo camping and hiking permits may also be obtained in-person at Monument Valley Park; Four Corners Monument; and the Navajo Parks & Recreation office in Cameron, AZ (928) 679-2303.

PRIVATE LAND: Private land is located between the Butler Wash Petroglyph Panel (mile 4.2 below Sand Island) and River House Ruin (mile 5.9 below Sand Island), and just upriver and downriver from the Mexican Hat launch area. Please respect the rights of private landowners and do not trespass on private lands.

RECREATION FACILITIES: The Sand Island Recreation Area, located 3 miles west of Bluff, has toilets, campsites, drinking water, a boat ramp, and day-use area. Campsites are \$10 a night and are first come, first served. Only the group site may be reserved in advance for groups of 15 or more persons by calling (435) 587-1504.

Facilities at the Mexican Hat site include a boat launch, day-use area, and toilet. Vehicles have been broken into at this location, so we advise that you don't camp or leave vehicles overnight at the launch area. Vehicles may be stored at local businesses for a fee.

There is a toilet and aluminum recycling at the Clay Hills take-out. There is no trash dump; please pack it out.

PETS: Pets are prohibited on river trips between Sand Island and Clay Hills Crossing.

DRINKING WATER: You should bring all of your drinking water. There are no reliable, potable sources of drinking water on the San Juan River. Filtering the water is difficult because the San Juan is extremely silty. A minimum of one gallon per person/per day is suggested.

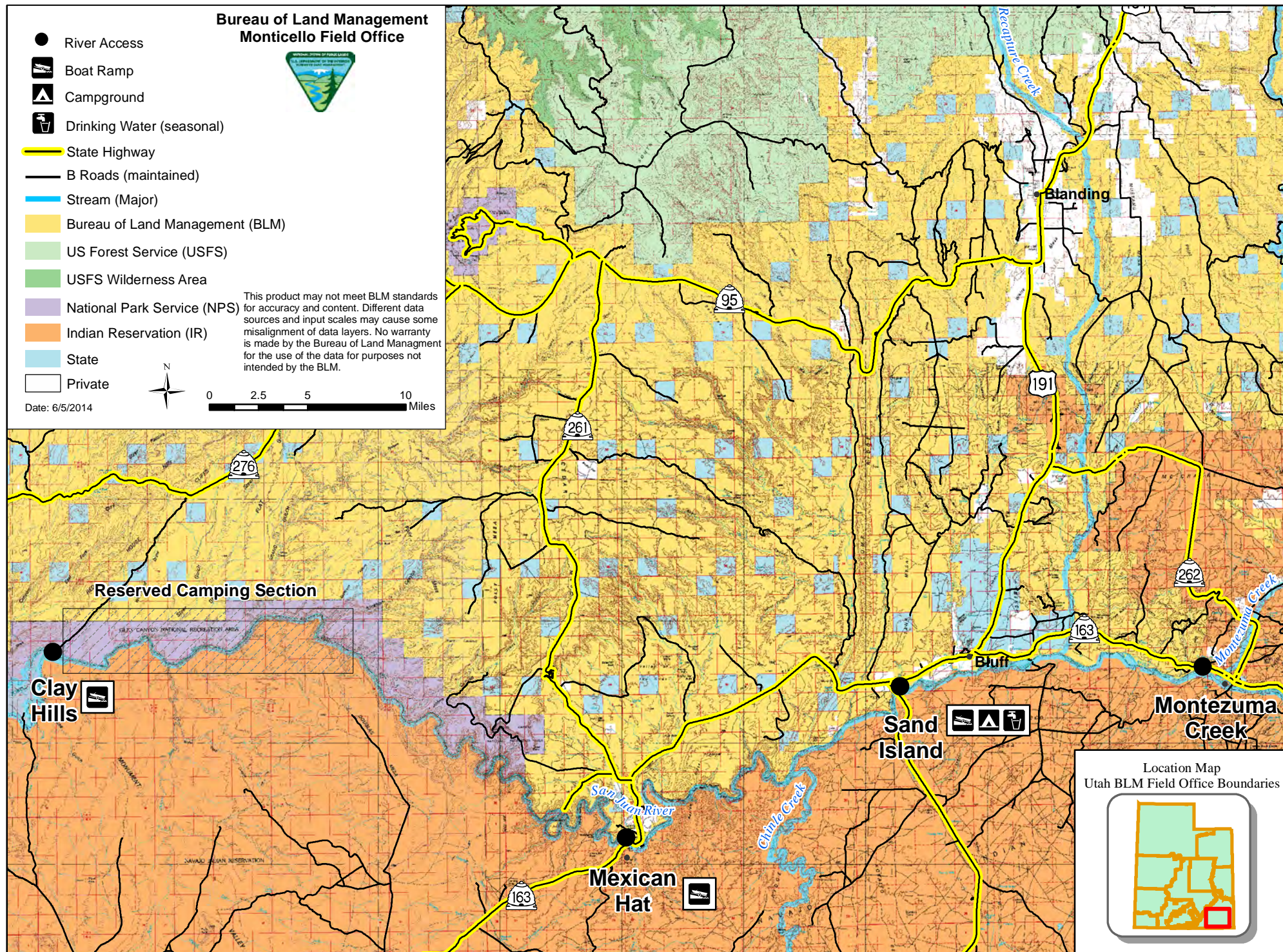
BLM AND NPS MANAGEMENT: The BLM Monticello Field Office manages the river from Montezuma Creek to the boundary of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and in cooperation with the National Park Service, administers permits for San Juan River use within the National Recreation Area.

EMERGENCY SERVICES: The County Sheriff's Department has search and rescue jurisdiction on public lands and normally takes the lead for such operations. For emergencies call the San Juan County Sheriff's Department at (435) 587-2237. Please note that cell service on the river is intermittent and unreliable. A satellite phone is recommended.

GUIDE BOOKS AND MAPS: Several river guide books and maps can be ordered online at the Canyonlands Natural History Association website, www.cnha.org, or purchased at local area businesses and visitor centers.

GUIDES, RENTALS, SHUTTLE PROVIDERS, & ACCOMODATIONS: For info on these services call San Juan County Visitor Services at (800) 574-4386 or visit www.utahscanyoncountry.com. A list of permitted San Juan River guides can be viewed at the BLM San Juan River Permits webpage. The BLM does not endorse or recommend any specific guide or guarantee their services.

San Juan River, Montezuma Creek to Clay Hills



Navajo Nation San Juan River Camping Closures (Year-Round)

Permits for hiking and camping on the Navajo Nation are required.

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Navajo Parks and Recreation Department

P. O. Box 2520, Window Rock, AZ 86515

(928) 871-6647 <http://navajonationparks.org/permits.htm>

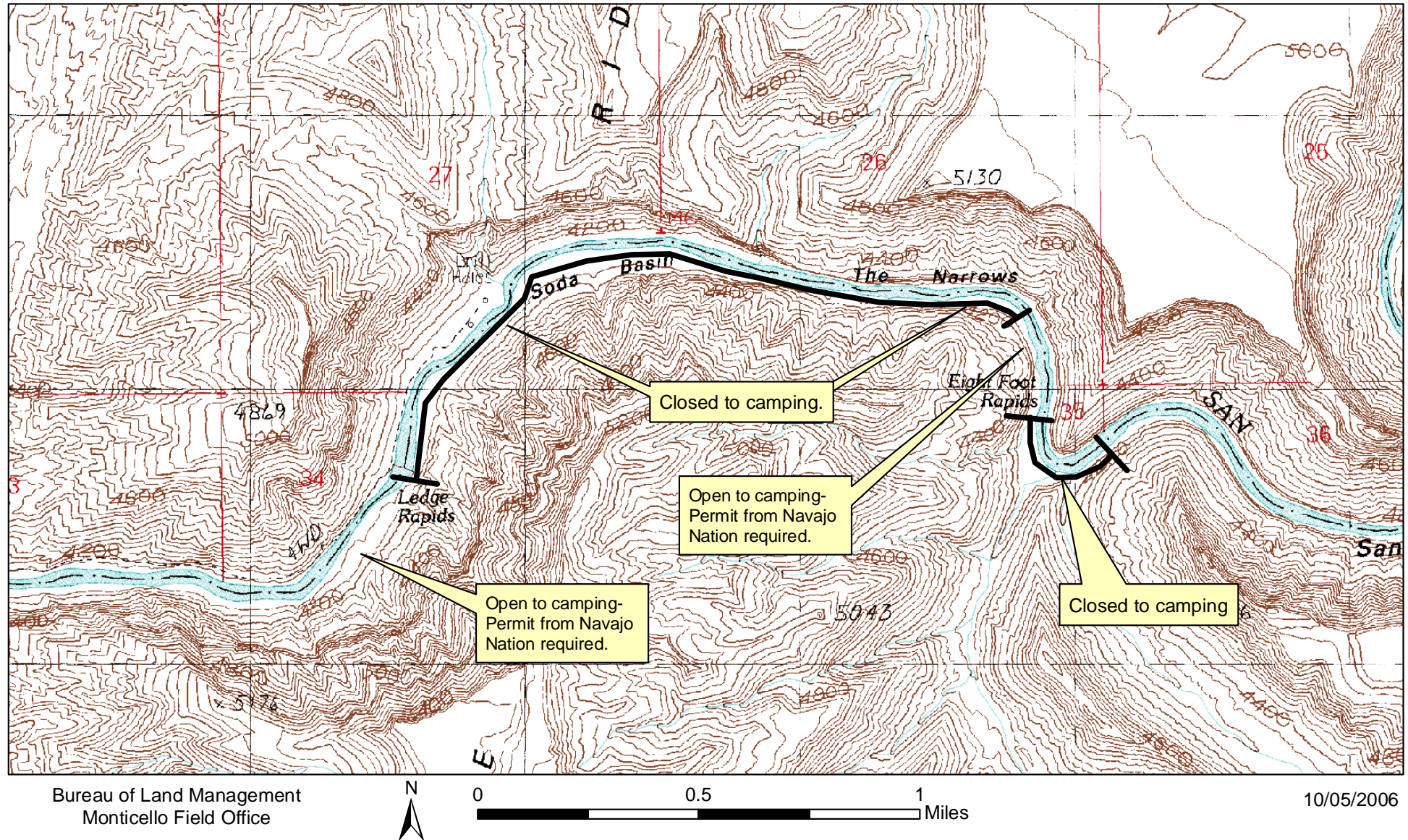
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Scouting rapids is allowed.

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San Juan River Flows 2009 - 2013

(Daily CFS 5/12/2009 - 5/12/2013)

